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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000147

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI/SHAW, OES/STC/ROTTIER
STATE FOR ECA/PE/V/F/E/EILEEN CONNOLLY
STATE ALSO FOR AF/S, AF/EPs

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12948: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [TSPL](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA - IDENTIFYING CANDIDATES FOR SCIENCE
ADVISORY CAPACITY PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA

REF: 04 STATE 272708

Sensitive but unclassified.

11. (U) Post welcomes the proposed Science & Technology Advisory Capacity Building Partnership and is pleased to provide feedback regarding appropriate representation from South Africa. We also support the proposed use of the Voluntary Visitor program for a follow-on week of meetings and activities in Washington, DC. We look forward to working with OES to implement this program.

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION

12. (SBU) Contacts at the Department of Science and Technology recently advised EST Officer that the department will undergo a restructuring over the next several months, to more clearly define its primary missions in frontier science and other areas of science activity and cooperation. Rather than single out a specific official from the department to participate in the capacity building activity, we strongly urge OES to send a letter of invitation to the Director-General of Science and Technology, Dr. Rob Adam, asking him to identify an appropriate representative from his Department to represent the South African government. The Department has a number of potentially strong candidates for participation, and working with Dr. Adam's office to identify a candidate will lead to stronger buy-in from the top levels of the Department.

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATION

13. (U) The National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) is appointed by the Minister of Science and Technology to advise him (and through him, South Africa's Cabinet) on the role and contribution of innovation (including science and technology) in promoting and achieving national objectives, such as 1) improving and sustaining the quality of life of all South Africans; 2) developing human resources for science and technology; 3) building the economy; and 4) strengthening the South Africa's international competitiveness.

14. (U) NACI's 22 members hail from government, industry, academia, parastatal science councils, and public utilities. Five members, including NACI's chairperson, represent prominent national universities. We recommend inviting the NACI Chairperson, Professor Calie Pistorius. We suggest including language in the invitation asking that, in the event that Prof. Pistorius is unable to participate, he designate one of NACI's other university representatives as a substitute. In light of NACI's role and the commitment of its members to public service, any of the five would be excellent candidates for the program. Below is background information on all five NACI members.

15. (U) Prof. Calie Pistorius, Vice Chancellor and Principal, University of Pretoria, is an accomplished engineer, researcher and teacher. He was appointed as Chair of NACI in May 2004 and held meetings with the Office of Science and Technology Policy, State Department (with DAS for Science and Health Lee Morin) and the National Academies of Science in July 2004 during a visit to the United States. He holds a PhD and Masters of Science in Electrical Engineering from Ohio State University and a Masters in Science in the Management of Technology from MIT's Sloan School of Management. He also has a Bachelors of Science and a Bachelors of Engineering in Electrical Engineering from the University of Pretoria.

16. (U) Prof. Cheryl de la Rey, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, University of Cape Town (UCT), is the past editor of the South African Journal of Psychology and remains on its editorial board. Her recent research focuses on leadership and higher education. She also serves on the Board of Control for the NIH-funded Center for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA). Prof. De la Rey has a PhD from the University of Cape Town and a Bachelors of Arts and Masters Degree from University of

Natal.

17. (U) Prof. Jennifer Thomson is Professor of Microbiology in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at UCT. Her current research interest is the development of maize resistant to the African endemic maize streak virus and tolerant to drought. She is a vocal advocate of plant biotechnology and helped to draft the SAG's national biotechnology strategy, which was published in 2001. She is the interim Chair of the USAID and Rockefeller Foundation-supported African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and a member of the board of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agribiotech Applications (ISAAA). Prof. Thomson has a Bachelors of Science in Zoology from the University of Cape Town, a Masters in Genetics from Cambridge University and a PhD in Microbiology from Rhodes University in South Africa. She was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School and a visiting scientist at MIT.

18. (U) Prof. Tshilidzi Marwala, Associate Professor, School of Electrical and Information Engineering, University of the Witwatersrand, in November 2004 received a Laureate Award from the University of Pretoria, the highest recognition that an outstanding achiever and alumnus can receive from fellow alumni of the University. In May 2004 the National Science and Technology Forum recognized him as the leading up-and-coming black male scientist in the country. Prof. Marwala's research interests include the application of neural networks, evolutionary computing and fuzzy logic to information security, financial modelling, condition monitoring, target recognition, conflict resolution and HIV/AIDS. Prof. Marwala holds a post-doctorate degree in Information Technology from University of London/Imperial College, a PhD in Computational Intelligence in Engineering Systems from Cambridge University, a Masters in Mechanical Engineering from University of Pretoria and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Case Western University in the U.S.

19. (U) Ms. Luci Abrahams, Director of the Learning Information Networking Knowledge (LINK) Centre of the School of Public and Development Management at the University of the Witwatersrand, also chairs the South Africa Reference Group on Women in Science and Technology. She is convener of the NACI working group's study on the "Mobility of R&D Workers." Her research interests include information and communications technology applications and related policy. Ms. Abrahams has a post-graduate diploma in Public and Development Management from the University of the Witwatersrand.

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